

## 1 HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the House of Representatives of  
3 the State of Illinois are pleased to honor citizens that have  
4 made outstanding contributions to the State of Illinois; and

5 WHEREAS, Marie LeBeau was born in New Orleans; she was  
6 raised a devout Catholic and studied business at the former  
7 Straight College; she visited Chicago at the age of 20 and  
8 met Charles Wilkinson on a blind date in Aurora; she moved to  
9 Illinois in 1927, where she married Mr. Wilkinson in 1930;  
10 they were married for 60 years, until Mr. Wilkinson passed  
11 away; and

12 WHEREAS, Mr. and Mrs. Wilkinson moved into a modest  
13 two-level home on Aurora's North View Street, now bearing  
14 Mrs. Wilkinson's name; their home was known simply as  
15 "Marie's house", where the poor, the hungry, the displaced,  
16 the unemployed, the sick, and the mistreated were welcome;  
17 and

18 WHEREAS, Mrs. Wilkinson first became an active voice in  
19 the community when she took an interest in Hispanic factory  
20 workers, pulling them from the boxcars they were living in,  
21 with no electricity, water, or even shoes; she worked on  
22 behalf of the factory workers and convinced the factory  
23 owners to provide year-round work for the employees; she went  
24 on to challenge City Hall to provide schools and adequate  
25 housing for the many people that had moved to Aurora; and

26 WHEREAS, Mrs. Wilkinson publicized the needs of those  
27 whom community leaders and media outlets once preferred to  
28 ignore; she helped to launch more than 60 charitable  
29 organizations, including Feed the Hungry Program, Hesed House  
30 Homeless Shelter, Breaking Free Drug Program, the Catholic  
31 Social Action Conference, SciTech Youth Science Museum, and  
32 the local chapter of the Urban League; she established

1 college funds for underprivileged children and inclusion  
2 guidelines for the disabled; and

3 WHEREAS, In the late 1940s, when Mrs. Wilkinson was  
4 refused seating at a local diner because she was  
5 African-American, she won her case before the State Appellate  
6 Court; through the Human Relations Commission that she  
7 founded in 1964, she is credited with the first Fair Housing  
8 Ordinance in Illinois; and

9 WHEREAS, In the 1970s, Mrs. Wilkinson saw the need for  
10 child care for the children of single mothers; with a group  
11 of other concerned residents, Mrs. Wilkinson raised \$46,000  
12 for a child-care center in Aurora; the Marie Wilkinson Child  
13 Development Center thrives today; and

14 WHEREAS, Mrs. Wilkinson has been honored for her  
15 unselfish contributions to her fellow travelers in Aurora; in  
16 October of 2002, Mrs. Wilkinson was presented with the  
17 Catholic Church's highest honor for missionary work in  
18 America, The Lumen Christi Award, meaning Light of Christ;  
19 therefore, be it

20 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
21 NINETY-THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that  
22 we honor Marie Wilkinson's many contributions to the citizens  
23 of Aurora and the State of Illinois by proclaiming Wednesday,  
24 September 3, 2003 as Marie Wilkinson Day in the State of  
25 Illinois; and be it further

26 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be  
27 presented to Marie Wilkinson as an expression of our respect  
28 and esteem for the endless work she has done on behalf of  
29 others, without regard to self.